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OCT 16 1953

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, GUATEMALA

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DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

October 16, 1953
DATE

REF : Emb Desp 319, October 13, 1953

	ACTION	DEPT.
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SUBJECT: Much Ado in the Partido Acción Revolucionaria, Guatemala's Largest Administration Party.

Central Files

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In a series of episodes giving much of the flavor of current politics in Guatemalan Administration circles, Sr. Francisco FERNANDEZ Foncea, who was recently removed from the Secretary Generalship of the Partido Acción Revolucionaria (PAR) by the party's National Council, tried with the assistance of several pistol-bearing associates on October 13 to keep the new Executive Committee from taking office while attempting to have his removal declared illegal. After much recrimination, the matter was provisionally settled when the Civil Registrar on October 14 accepted Sr. Julio ESTRADA de la Hoz as the new Secretary General over Sr. Fernández Foncea's protests and registered the Executive, Political and Disciplinary Committees chosen by the National Council as the legally constituted committees of the PAR.

The dissension in the PAR, which had been brought to a head by Sr. Fernández Foncea's declaration in Congress that the PAR was destined to become part of the "world Communist movement," quickly departed from the ideological field and degenerated into a factional fight for power. The National Council, in removing him from the Secretary Generalship on Saturday, October 10, avoided all direct reference to the Communist issue and Major Marco Antonio FRANCO, a PAR Deputy, later indicated to reporters that the PAR was not against the Communist party and that the objection was not so much to what Sr. Fernández had said but to the fact that he was drunk when he said it.

Sr. Fernández Foncea, for his part, continued to maintain that his removal from the Secretary Generalship was illegal and charged that Sr. Humberto GONZALEZ Juárez, President Arbenz's Private Secretary who is generally acknowledged to have emerged in a stronger position in the PAR, bribed several National Council members to oust him. On Tuesday, October 13 (Monday being a holiday) Sr. Fernández Foncea delivered a memorandum to the Civil Registrar maintaining that he and the old party officers were the only legally elected PAR officers and then proceeded to the PAR headquarters where he and several armed

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followers installed themselves. They refused to hand over to the new officers who were forced to retreat after several arguments which, according to reporters, nearly resulted in fights. On the following day, Sr. Humberto HERNANDEZ Cobos, the Civil Registrar accepted the registration of the new officers, and Sr. Fernández Foncea is now threatening to take the matter to court.

Throughout this conflict, Srs. Alvaro Hugo SALGUERO and Guillermo MELBOURNE, who had previously shown themselves out of sympathy with Sr. Fernández Foncea's extreme pro-Communist line, joined him in attacking the new slate of PAR officers from which they also had been excluded.

These episodes in the PAR once again illustrated the lack of ideological firmness and opportunism which prevail in the leftist Administration parties and the consequent improbability of the crystallization of a vigorous anti-Communist left at the present juncture in Guatemalan politics.

Rudolf E. Schoenfeld